United Nations A/67/134/Add.1

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 September 2012

Original: English

**Sixty-seventh session**
Item 100 of the provisional agenda*
**Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region**

# Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

## Report of the Secretary-General

**Addendum****

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* A/67/150.

** The information in the present addendum was received after the issuance of the main report.

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# II. Replies received from Governments

## Portugal

[14 August 2012]

Cooperation among the Mediterranean countries is of paramount importance to peace, stability and development in the region, building confidence in a future that is better if shared together. Portugal has been involved in various dimensions of cooperation, including in the areas of defence, culture, science and education. In fact, Portugal believes that strengthening the cultural ties of countries is essential to the goals envisaged in resolution 66/63 and others that have focused on the subject of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region.

Portugal has, for many years, been an active partner in programmes that have endeavoured to further the relations between Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries, such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EuroMed), the Union for the Mediterranean, formerly known as Barcelona Process, and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. Some of the recent activities in the areas of defence, education and research in which Portugal takes part are highlighted below.

### Defence

Cooperation in the area of defence is a key element in building confidence among the Governments of the region. In this connection, Portugal takes part in the 5+5 defence initiative, whose actions in military cooperation and civilian emergency planning involve nine other countries in the Mediterranean region (Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia). In 2013, Portugal will assume the Presidency of the initiative and will try to deepen the level of cooperation, and consequently the level of security, in the Mediterranean region.

### Higher education and research

Portugal also attaches great importance to cooperation in the areas of research and higher education. Indeed, considering that cultural dialogue and cooperation among different peoples, namely those of the Mediterranean region, greatly contribute not only to the broadening of knowledge in all disciplines but also to a better and deeper understanding of the cultures of the peoples in the region and that this kind of knowledge must be seen as a powerful weapon in the fight for peace and against terrorism, Portugal, through its higher education institutions and research centres, has been actively involved in the creation of academic partnerships of varying import and scope, all of them sharing a concern with fostering the kind of cooperation in the Mediterranean region that may lead to a more secure environment in the area. The University of Lisbon has, for many years, undertaken to further such goals. Specific actions include:

(a) Establishment of the Centre of Arabic and Islamic Studies, a research unit of the Faculty of Letters with various types of cooperation with academic entities in the Mediterranean region;

(b) Partner membership in the Euro-Mediterranean University. The University is based in Slovenia and is one of the six priority areas of the Union for the Mediterranean. It was established as an international network of universities (179 members from 38 countries). The core mission of the University is the

fostering of understanding among peoples and the encouragement of cooperation in higher education, following up on the objectives of the Catania Process and of the first Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Scientific Research (Cairo, June 2007). The University of Lisbon is part of this network of partner institutions and existing universities from the region and hosted the fourth General Assembly of the Euro-Mediterranean University on 25 November 2011. The attribution of an honoris causa degree to the former Vice-President of the European Parliament, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropolou, as a person deeply connected to Mediterranean affairs, at the joint event of the Euro-Mediterranean University and the University of Lisbon also underlined the role played by European educational institutions in cultural diplomacy affairs of the Mediterranean;

(c) The agreement, signed in September 2008 and recently renewed, between the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon and the Camões Institute with the University Mohamed V, in Rabat, for the offering by the University of Lisbon of a degree in Portuguese studies in Rabat. Several students are graduating now, others are completing their doctorates, and the university has just created a new Department of Portuguese Language and Culture;

(d) Hosting of an annual Africa Day event in cooperation with embassies from African countries. The most recent one took place on 25 May 2012, under the auspices of the Ambassador of Morocco;

(e) Hosting by the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Lisbon of the Mediterranean Culture Exchanges (ECUME) International Seminar of Art Schools of the Mediterranean, from 31 May to 3 June 2012. The seminar resulted in the establishment of a consortium of universities for the constitution of a Tempus programme partnership on the restructuring of university curricula in the arts. Representatives of the Embassy of Algeria in Lisbon attended the seminar. ECUME is formally supported by the Ministries of Culture of Algeria, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, Spain, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia. It also has the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, the Junta de Andalucía, the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Wilaya of Tangiers, the Caisse d'épargne and the Fundación Tres Culturas;

(f) Co-organization and hosting of the second edition of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations summer school, in August and September 2011. A new edition of the summer school will take place in 2012.